

# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### PREPARATION FOR PRIVATE DUTY

Two questions in a recent state examination had a bearing upon the preparation of pupil nurses for private duty. They were asked how to prepare for an operation in a home, and how to prepare salt solution in a private house. Oddly enough, the answers to the question about the operation were better than those in regard to salt solution. Most had the proportions for salt solution correct, almost all knew that it should be sterile, but the point on which many were lacking was knowledge of the fact that *water boils away*. With perfect innocence they described the boiling of a pint of water for two hours, or of a quart of water for one hour on each of three successive days,—forgetting that either the water would disappear in steam or that, if there were any left, the carefully measured proportions would be lost, and the solution which remained would be much stronger than when it was started.

This is not a serious lack, for any nurse with any brains who put salt solution on to boil would observe its decrease in quantity and would discover for herself that she must have additional sterile water with which to accurately supply the lost amount. A more serious fault was in the answers of those women who described filling glass bottles with salt solution and putting them in an oven to bake for hours. Perhaps it is ourselves, not the pupils, who are at fault here; perhaps it is really possible to heat jars sufficiently in a dry oven to sterilize the contents without damage, but we cannot escape a vision of cracked jars, a flooded oven, and a dismayed nurse, who comes for her salt solution and finds only wreckage.

It is very difficult for instructors in training schools, especially those who have always done hospital work, to think ahead and foresee

the problems that will arise outside and prepare their pupils to meet them. Most of the papers describing the operation in a private house showed evidence of careful teaching and described the procedure thoughtfully and sensibly. There are always some misguided souls who insist on "scrubbing the walls and ceiling with corrosive." Only a few suggested such impossibilities as a sterilizer, a Kelly pad, a can of oxygen, "twelve basins and pitchers," etc. Those who did will probably adjust themselves in some way to their environment when they find themselves in a farmhouse, miles from a drug store, without even a rubber sheet at hand. Most nurses do rise to such occasions and find real pleasure in providing good surroundings for the patient with the materials at hand. There are so many versions of the wash-boiler sterilizer, some of them so vague, that perhaps it will be well to describe once more a simple method which has been tested again and again. This will be found on another page under Practical Suggestions.

In conclusion, let us say that after looking over examination papers, one is more than ever convinced of the wisdom of an old remark of Miss McIsaac's: "A nurse need not think that because she has entered a training school she must forget everything she ever knew before and leave her common sense behind." Plain, ordinary, practical, common sense is a better guide both in actual nursing and in the answering of examination questions than a wild searching through the corners of the mind for some technical terms from a half forgotten lecture. The women examined who described a fracture as a broken bone were within the realm of common sense. Those who had been taught that it was "the solution of the continuity of a bone" were so perplexed as to what these words really mean that they in many cases substituted some different phrase, sounding like this, which just spoiled the answer. It seems a pity that any pupil should leave any school with vague ideas on so simple a subject as a fracture.

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#### TEMPERANCE

IN the letter box will be found a communication in regard to the use of a nurse's influence on behalf of temperance by teaching her patients the effect upon the system of stimulants. May we suggest that all nurses who are connected in any way with philanthropic work can aid this cause in another way by helping to bring about better feeding of the poor. Very often a man resorts to intoxicants because he has not enough food of the proper sort, properly prepared. His system craves something more and he turns to drink. The money spent for liquor

decreases the sum left for food, so the evil works in two ways. The small wage earner often spends more on food, in proportion to his income, than people of larger means, but because the women of the family are ignorant or wasteful much less good is obtained from it.

We once heard a cook employed by a well-to-do family, deplore the waste and extravagance she saw in the households of her married friends. A roast of beef would be used twice, perhaps, first hot and then cold, and the remainder thrown away. When she protested and asked why it was not fixed over, she was told that it cost too much to buy things to make it good, and that they liked fresh meat better. Cooking schools, where young girls can be taught how to prepare food in a wholesome, economic, and attractive manner are among the greatest aids to good home living and help to promote both temperate habits and morality, for drinking and vice go hand in hand.

In Chicago, and probably in many other large cities, such cooking classes have been introduced into the public schools. In Rochester, N. Y., a philanthropic manufacturer pays for courses at the Mechanics' Institute to which girls from the public schools are sent as part of their course. It would be interesting to know to what extent visiting nurses have been able to aid in establishing such schools. The private duty nurse finds herself many times in a home where the attention of the mother needs to be called to the necessity of more attractive nourishing food for her husband and children, but as the nurse is enjoying the hospitality of the home, such as it is, it is very difficult to make such a suggestion wisely or acceptably. The one who can, is a true home missionary.

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#### COLLABORATORS

A CIRCULAR letter was sent recently to the JOURNAL collaborators, asking them what plans they had for work during the coming year. The reply to one of these letters is so excellent an outline of the duties of a collaborator that we reproduce it for the benefit of others on the staff, who may be glad to profit by its suggestions, and also for the perusal of those warm friends of the JOURNAL who, though not listed as collaborators, are always working faithfully for its interests. There are many such, and it is because of such loyal support that the JOURNAL continues to hold its place in the nursing world.

"As a collaborator of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING my policy has been to talk to every nurse, with whom I come in contact, about the merits of the JOURNAL—our responsibility as nurses to sup-

port a publication that is up to date on nursing affairs and that enables nurses to keep in touch with the work of nurses over the whole country; and as our office is the headquarters for our local Graduate Nurses' Association, as well as a rapidly growing Visiting Nurse Association, I always have copies of the JOURNAL in plain sight. I have endeavored to meet all superintendents of hospitals and have given sample copies. Have written from time to time to the nursing organizations throughout the state to send any interesting articles, reports of meetings, etc. Have tried to secure lists of nurses and hospitals throughout the state."

We are glad to announce that we have added to our staff of collaborators four members who are too well known to need any introduction,—Miss Ross of Johns Hopkins, Miss Sly of Michigan, Miss Hay of the Illinois Training School, and Miss Wheeler of Blessing Hospital, Quincy, Illinois.

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#### PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

FOUR more states have obtained registration for nurses,—Illinois, Minnesota, West Virginia, and Georgia. Of these, Illinois has been struggling the longest for such recognition, and its ill-luck seems to still cling to it, for though the bill was passed in the spring, and became a law in July, the governor, who has the power of appointing the board of nurse examiners, has as yet failed to do so. All is not won when the bill is passed, as California and West Virginia can testify, for California has been two years in possession of a state law, without succeeding in getting its board of regents to administer it, and West Virginia is in the same case as Illinois. The appointment of the board is left to the governor and he does not act.

Minnesota is more fortunate. Its bill required that one member of the board should be a graduate of a medical school. This place has been filled by a woman physician, the board has been chosen, and is at work. In Georgia, events have moved swiftly and favorably. The state association was organized this year. The bill was drafted in May, and was passed by the General Assembly on a unanimous vote, fifteen minutes before midnight, on August 17th, the closing night of the session. Five days later it received the signature of the governor. This bill is more liberal than the others in the matter of the appointment of the board of examiners, for the state association is privileged to submit a list from which the governor makes his appointments. Copies of these bills will be found on another page, and those working along these lines will be interested in comparing them.

### CIVIC WORK OF ONE ASSOCIATION

FOR the first time we hear of a graduate nurses' association asking for an investigation of a badly conducted hospital. In Cleveland, Ohio, where all branches of philanthropic work seem to be conducted on a basis of harmony and co-operation, the Graduate Nurses' Association asked the Chamber of Commerce to investigate conditions at a public hospital. The association had refused to admit graduates of this school to membership, knowing that it had a low standard, but they went further than this and tried to secure better conditions for it by bringing it to the attention of the city authorities. The committee of investigation found conditions so bad that a thorough overhauling of the building and system of administration is taking place with the result that the buildings will be made sanitary, and the patients supplied with proper care, one of the requirements being that a graduate nurse of some other school be placed in charge.

The standing of the Graduate Nurses' Association of Cleveland in the community may be inferred from the fact that it was asked by the Chamber of Commerce to make recommendations for needed improvements for this hospital. This is not the first public spirited work done by this association, for the Visiting Nurse Association was inaugurated by it, and it maintains a successful central directory for nurses.

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### CIVIL NURSES IN MANILA

A LETTER received by the editor from Miss Freeman of the Civil Hospital, Manila, gives further details in regard to the conditions under which nurses go out there. Probably many of our readers are as ignorant as we confess ourselves to have been of the fact that the government sends out nurses under civil contracts who are quite distinct from the army nurses, not being under the same supervision nor working under the same regulations.

The salary is sixty dollars a month, with expenses one way. The nurses pay for their own washing, which averages five dollars a month, and there are other incidental expenses amounting to about twenty dollars a year. As the expenses of the return trip from Manila to New York are from two hundred and fifty to three hundred and fifty dollars, and are to be borne by the nurse, she should understand this plainly before starting, that she may plan to save that amount from her salary. Evidently this has not been made perfectly clear in the past, as eight

nurses now stationed in the Civil Hospital went out with the expectation of having their return expenses paid. Twenty-eight days' leave annually is compulsory. If a nurse has been ill, she may deduct that time, otherwise she is forced to spend it in a vacation which she really needs, but which is expensive, as change of air is almost a necessity.

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### THE EVOLUTION OF THE NURSE

IT is our privilege to print for the benefit of our readers an address given to the nurses of Lakeside Hospital, Cleveland, by Dr. Lowman. Although the address has no controversial elements, and was not given to aid any cause, no better justification for the higher education of the nurse has come to our notice. This is one of the rare articles that lift us above the smoke and din of the battle field and give us a wide outlook over the whole horizon; and every nurse who reads the article will, we predict, finish it with a new sense of pride in her profession and of her chosen place in it, wherever that place may be.

It is discouraging to the leaders in any movement to have their ideals misunderstood and misinterpreted by those who should be their supporters. The past two years in the nursing world have been full of unrest, and the standards established by so much hard effort have seemed in danger of being lowered. In the face of much criticism, it is inspiring to receive the support of such men as Dr. Lowman, Dr. Hurd, and many others. The better class of medical men and the better class of nurses are working for the same ends,—the best possible preparation of those to whom is to be entrusted the care of the sick.

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### MISS NUTTING'S PORTRAIT

THROUGH the courtesy of the editor of the *Johns Hopkins Nurses Alumnae Magazine*, we are able to reproduce for our readers a picture of Miss Nutting's portrait. This portrait is beautiful in itself, is a faithful likeness, and is a touching tribute to the esteem in which she is held by her pupils,—alumnae and undergraduates, for it was painted for them by Miss Cecilia Beaux and has been presented by them to the training school, where it will be an enduring memorial of Miss Nutting's work for the school.

When the portrait was presented to the trustees of the school on March 30th, addresses were made by representatives of the alumnae, of the trustees, of the medical staff, and of her friends, all telling simply,

but with feeling, of the high place she holds in their esteem as a nurse, as an educator, and as a woman. She will take up her new work with the good wishes of all who know her personally, and with the co-operation of hundreds who do not know her, but who have faith in her success, and who are doing their part toward putting the hospital economics course on a secure financial basis.

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#### ADDITIONS TO NURSING LITERATURE

THE book by Miss Maxwell and Miss Pope reviewed in this issue, adds another volume to the text-books written by nurses which are always welcomed above those written by doctors for nurses, for though the latter may be more scientific, these are more practical, and are almost always better for purposes of teaching.

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#### OFFICERS OF EXAMINING BOARDS

WE have several times been asked to publish in the Official Directory the names and addresses of the officers of the examining boards of nurses now existing. Beginning with this number a list of these, as far as we have been able to secure them, will be found at the end of the Official Directory.

